

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05
ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /070 W
-----075895 112326Z /66

R 112312Z MAY 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1307
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01915

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, AORG, UNRWA, XF
SUBJECT: UNRWA WORKING GROUP MEETING, MAY 11

REF: STATE 11880

1. SUMMARY: UNRWA WORKING GROUP MET ON MAY 11 TO
HEAR REPORT ON FINANCIAL STATUS OF UNRWA PRESENTED
BY COMMISSIONER-GENERAL MCELHINEY. MCELHINEY ALSO
DISCUSSED PROJECTED TRANSFER OF UNRWA HEADQUARTERS
FROM BEIRUT. END SUMMARY.

2. UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF TURKISH PERM REP TURKMEN,
WORKING GROUP HELD BRIEF MEETING ON MAY 11.
COMMISSIONER-GENERAL MCELHINEY OUTLINED CURRENT FINANCIAL
SITUATION OF UNRWA. UNCOVERED FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS
FOR 1978 TOTAL APPROXIMATELY \$38.4 MILLION. MCELHINEY
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EXPLAINED WHERE CUTBACKS WOULD OCCUR IN HEALTH,
EDUCATION AND RELIEF SERVICES UNLESS ADDITIONAL
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OR INCREASES IN REGULAR
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE PLEDGED FOR 1978.

3. AS TO STEPS UNRWA IS TAKING TO MEET THE SHORTFALL,
MCELHINEY REMARKED THAT HE HAS SENT LETTERS TO MAJOR

CONTRIBUTORS ASKING FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS. HE ADDED THAT HE IS ALSO CONCENTRATING ATTENTION ON OPEC COUNTRIES WHICH UNRWA BELIEVES ARE CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING MORE. HE HAS SENT SPECIAL LETTERS TO OPEC COUNTRIES AND TO THE OPEC SECRETARY-GENERAL; THERE HAVE BEEN NO COMMITMENTS FROM THEM AS YET.

4. RESPONDING TO JAPANESE REP'S QUERY ON PROJECTED TRANSFER OF UNRWA HEADQUARTERS FROM BEIRUT, MCELHINEY NOTED THAT TRANSFER WAS BASED ON PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF PERSONEL SAFETY OF UNRWA HEADQUARTERS STAFF OF 78 PERSONS. HE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS SPEND ABOUT TWO DAYS OF THE WORK WEEK ON QUESTIONS RELATED TO PERSONAL SAFETY. RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN CRIMES OF VIOLENCE, PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE WITH REGARD TO FOREIGNERS. THERE HAVE BEEN OVER 15 ARMED ASSAULTS, BRUTAL BEATINGS AND 2 RAPES OF UNRWA HEADQUARTERS STAFF PERSONNEL. THE STAFF ASSOCIATION HAS DEMANDED THAT UNRWA HEADQUARTERS BE TRANSFERRED OUT OF BEIRUT.

5. MCELHINEY SAID THAT ABOUT ONE MONTH AGO HE APPROACHED THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER AND SUBSEQUENTLY MET WITH OFFICIALS OF JORDANIAN, SYRIAN, AND AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENTS TO DISCUSS AVAILABILITY OF RENT FREE OFFICE SPACE AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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UNRWA STAFF. MCELHINEY EXPLAINED THAT UNRWA HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH FREE OFFICE SPACE IN BEIRUT AND WOULD REQUIRE SUCH IN NEW LOCATION. SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM HAS GIVEN HIS CONSENT TO THE TRANSFER. SHOULD SECURITY SITUATION IMPROVE IN BEIRUT, UNRWA WOULD DROP PLANS FOR TRANSFER.

6. MCELHINEY NOTED THAT THERE IS NO OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR UNRWA HDQTRS TO REMAIN IN BEIRUT; LEBANESE FIELD OFFICE OF UNRWA WOULD OF COURSE REMAIN. HE POINTED OUT THAT SYRIAN REGULATIONS AFFECTING FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR HIS STAFF CAST DOUBTS ON VIABILITY OF DAMASCUS AS SITE FOR HEADQUARTERS. AMMAN HAS CERTAIN ADVANTAGES AND PART OF HIS STAFF WOULD BE MOVING THERE IN ANY EVENT; HOWEVER, UNRWA IS WAITING FOR A RESPONSE FROM THE GOJ AS TO AVAILABILITY OF OFFICE SPACE, FACILITIES, HOUSING, ETC.

7. AS TO COSTS OF PLANNED MOVE, MCELHINEY SAID IF TRANSFER WERE MADE TO VIENNA, MOVING EXPENSES WOULD AMOUNT TO LESS THAN \$100,000; NET

ADDITIONAL COSTS ARE DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE BUT WOULD PROBABLY TOTAL LESS THAN \$1 MILLION. HE ADDED THAT GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA WOULD BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE OFFICE FACILITIES (FREE) IN ABOUT 3-4 WEEKS. LEBANESE DEL RAISED QUESTION OF POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IN LEBANON. MCELHINEY RESPONDED THAT PLANNED TRANSFER RESULTS FROM NEED TO PROVIDE PERSONAL SAFETY TO STAFF AND TO LESSER DEGREE FROM REQUIREMENT FOR OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE.

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8. U.S. DELEGATION HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE POINTS IN REFTEL BEFORE WORKING GROUP MEETING. MCELHINEY WAS SYMPATHETIC TO OUR QUESTIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATIONS WITH MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS. HE WILL BE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS TO DEGREE POSSIBLE DURING HIS TRIP. YOUNG

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